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ABSTRACT

The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) retraining program is for air traffic controllers who have been removed from their jobs due to either operational or medical disqualifications. The FAA's New England region second career program deals mainly with older adults who have completed their child rearing and related family responsibilities by the time they enter the program. The services provided by the second career program include vocational counseling and assessment, training, monitoring client progress, and placement services. In the New England program, primary emphasis is placed on securing on-the-job training situations for clients. According to follow-up questionnaire responses, 25% of the program graduates are currently employed. (Interviews with program participants which represent a variety of career choices and training situations are included.) (LRA)

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Appendix 03

THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'S SECOND CAREER PROGRAM

by Paul Ferrini

December 1977

This case history describes the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Second Career Program, a retraining program for air traffic controllers who have been removed from their jobs due to either operational or medical disqualifications. Although general information is provided on the Program as a whole, this case focuses on the experiences of the FAA's New England Region in administering the Second Career Program. Because most of the clients of the New England Region are between 40 and 55 years of age, the specific counseling, training, and placement strategies described here will be of interest to administrators seeking to address the career needs of adults in this age group.

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 1

2.0 Description of Public Law 92-297 2

3.0 The Need for a Second Career Program 4

4.0 Organizational Structure 8

5.0 Funding 9

6.0 Staffing 10

7.0 Supervision and Inter-Regional Cooperation 11

8.0 Client Services

8.1 Vocational Counseling and Assessment 13

8.2 Training 17

8.3 Monitoring Client Progress 20

8.4 Placement 22

9.0 Client Interviews 23

10.0 Program Evaluations 28

11.0 The Future of the Program

11.1 Needed Program and/or Legislative Changes 30

11.2 Program Achievements and Replication Possibilities . . . 31

12.0 References 33

13.0 Appendix: Program Contacts 33

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A major portion of the material in this case history is based on interviews with Harold Alexander, staff person in the Training Division of The Federal Aviation Administration's Washington headquarters, and Ben Parker, ATCS Second Career Program Manager for the Federal Aviation Administration's New England Region. New England is one of eleven regional offices of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). All regional offices operate Second Career Programs for en route or terminal air traffic controllers who have been removed from their jobs due to either operational or medical disqualifications.

Like other regional Second Career Programs, the New England Region's Program is both unique and typical. It is unique in that the majority of its Second Career clients are older than those of other regions. Most of them have had long careers as air traffic controllers and have completed their child rearing and related family responsibilities by the time they enter the program. Because of this, they are more likely to set career goals which involve self-employment or other flexible work options than are the clients of other regions, who are younger and who still have major financial commitments to meet. By the quality of its response to this specific clientele, the New England Region's Program can serve as a model for other program administrators attempting to address the needs of career changers over 40 years of age.

However, inspite of the difference in clientele and career identification strategies, the overall structure of the New England Region's Program (eligibility requirements, training guidelines and other administrative procedures) is identical to that of other regional Second Career Programs. Thus, although the focus

of this case history is on the experiences of one region in administrating the Second Career Program, general background information on the Program as a whole is provided throughout this case. Readers who wish more information on the experiences of other regions are referred to the Program's Five Year Report, which is listed in the Reference Section (12.0) of this case history.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC LAW 92-297

The Second Career Program was mandated by the passage of Public Law 92-297 by the 92nd Congress on May 16, 1972. The Law entitles an air traffic controller in a covered position,* with five or more years of service, to up to two years of training, providing that the controller has been removed from his position through no fault of his own. More specifically, an air traffic controller can qualify for the Second Career Program if he has been removed from his position for any of the following reasons:

1) he is medically disqualified for duties as a controller;

2) he is unable to maintain technical proficiency as a controller; or

3) such removal is necessary for the preservation of the physical or mental health of the controller.

Public Law 92-297 also extends Second Career Program benefits to air traffic controllers who are eligible for immediate retirement, if their removal is deemed necessary in the interest of:

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*Air traffic controller in a covered position means "an employee of the Department of Transportation who is actively engaged in the separation and control of air traffic, or who is the immediate supervisor of an employee actively engaged in the separation and control of air traffic, in either a tower or enroute air traffic control facility."

1) aviation safety;

2) the efficient control of air traffic; or

3) the preservation of the physical or mental health of the controller.

Under the law, retirement eligibles are entitled to receive a guaranteed annuity equal to 50% of their high-three average salaries, provided they have:

1) completed 25 years of service in air traffic control; or

2) reached the age of fifty and completed 20 years of air traffic control service.

Although it is frequently argued that retirement eligibles do not need Second Career Program benefits (see Section 11.1), it should be noted that Public Law 92-297 now qualifies them for Second Career benefits as well as for substantial retirement benefits.*

In addition to training entitlements, all air traffic controllers who qualify for the Second Career Program continue to receive their full salaries while they participate in the Program. More specifically, a Second Career participant must be:

1) retained at his last assigned grade and rate of basic pay as a controller;

2) entitled to each increase in rate of basic pay provided under law; and

3) excluded from staffing limitations otherwise applicable.

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*FAA has recently requested a change in PL-92-297 to eliminate Second Career training for those eligible for immediate retirement.

In implementing Public Law 92-297, the Federal Aviation Administration has issued a basic directive and two amendments to its regional offices since the inception of the Second Career legislation. The last two revisions (May 16, 1975 and July 15, 1976 respectively) established more detailed requirements for Program administration. In these directives, for example, increasing emphasis has been placed on providing vocational counseling and assessment services to Second Career participants. Such changes in FAA administration of Public Law 92-297 will be discussed, where appropriate, throughout the body of this case history.

3.0 THE NEED FOR A SECOND CAREER PROGRAM

There are two basic reasons why air traffic controllers require some sort of retraining when they are no longer able to perform their job duties. First, air traffic control requires highly specialized skills which are not transferable to other employment contexts. The majority of air traffic controllers enter the field at a young age (early to middle twenties) and most have little formal education beyond high school. The two primary employers for air traffic controllers are the military and the FAA, the latter being by far the largest employer. In order for an air traffic controller to continue in an FAA position, he must pass an annual Class II medical examination and give continual evidence of his proficiency on the job. Should a controller fail to pass this medical examination or to meet the proficiency requirements, he must be relieved of his job duties.

Typically, a significant number of controllers become disqualified for air traffic control work when they reach middle age. The majority of these are

disqualified for medical reasons. For example, one of the Class II medical regulations is that a controller cannot take certain medications on the job. Thus, a controller who discovers he has diabetes and must take insulin in order to preserve his health no longer qualifies for air traffic control work. In the past, such an employee would have to be dismissed from his job with no benefits other than the standard government employee's disability retirement annuity. Assuming this employee to be 40 years old with 15 years of service, he would receive 40% of his salary. Using an average salary rate of $30,000 per year (based on 1977 figures), this employee would receive at least $12,000 per year in disability retirement payments. Assuming also that this individual still has considerable family responsibilities, he may not be able to support his family on $12,000 per year. He would have to find another job, without having the marketable skills necessary to enter a new career field.

Moreover, disqualifications regularly take place for routine medical problems resulting from the normal aging process. Examples of this include deteriorization of eyesight and hearing, or the development of an irregular heart rate. When these more common medical difficulties are considered, it is easier to perceive the large number of middle aged air traffic controllers whose jobs and overall financial security have been threatened by the medical and proficiency requirements of their work.

Before the establishment of the Second Career Program, air traffic controller supervisors, flight surgeons, and other FAA officials sought to avoid the dismissal of worthy employees in a manner that was costly and often ineffective. Disqualified controllers would be given unchallenging, routine paperwork positions or special jobs would be created for them within FAA, sometimes while the controllers continued on paper in their old positions, receiving the same salaries and benefits. Although such arrangements were intended

to assist disqualified controllers, they were costly to the Administration and often resulted in a shortage of air traffic control manpower. Moreover, these arrangements could only be justified in the short run, and ultimately gave the disqualified controller little more job security than he had at the time of his official or unofficial removal.

The lack of a retraining program and/or other special benefits for disqualified air traffic controllers encouraged some controllers to disguise their medical problems in order to remain employed as long as possible. Sometimes fellow workers would sympathize with a controller under physical or mental duress and "cover" for that individual whenever necessary. Such situations placed inordinate responsibility and stress on those controllers trying to do someone else's job in addition to their own.

These factors represent the generally accepted reason why a retraining program for disqualified air traffic controllers was considered necessary. Nevertheless, there is another reason which some people believe is equally important. According to some individuals--and among these are a large number of air traffic controllers--the occupation itself is considered to be hazardous. As such, they believe that a large proportion of the physical and mental health factors which have disqualified air traffic controllers have been caused by the stress of the job. They point to examples in which controllers have been the cause of a collision or a near miss, arguing that no one can live with the knowledge that the lives of thousands of people rest on their shoulders without suffering physical and mental symptoms such as hypertension and anxiety.

Regardless of the merits of the latter argument, there is no question that it was a factor in the discussions and investigations which led to the passage of Public Law 92-297. To be sure, it was an argument used by unions

such as the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) and the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists (NAATS), both of which groups played a major role in lobbying for Second Career legislation. In fact, during the years immediately preceding legislative action, both unions gained large numbers of members.

Although the FAA did not accept the above contention, many key FAA administrators readily admitted that there was a need for Second Career legislation. They knew that a retraining program for disqualified air traffic controllers would enable the FAA to effect a humane separation of disqualified controllers in a shorter period of time, and thus save the taxpayer money in the long run.

With these factors in mind, the Federal Aviation Administration began planning for the Second Career Program in 1969, three years before the legislation was passed. In designing the basic program structure, FAA administrators could examine other government retraining program precedents such as those operated by the Veteran's Administration, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Department of Labor. Yet, such precedents aside, a good portion of the FAA's program design task was and is unique. Successful retraining of a disqualified air traffic controller requires overcoming such obstacles as non-transferable job skills, age discrimination, high salary expectations and occupations limitations relevant to specific physical or mental disabilities.

It is important to note then that the FAA's Second Career Program represents one of the first programs of its kind in the nation. The need for the Program remains as great as it was in 1972. Since then, many problem areas have been identified and these doubtlessly need to be addressed. Yet the success

or failure of the program has implications not just for the FAA, but for all government employees who are removed without fault from their jobs, and especially for those possessing non-transferable skills.

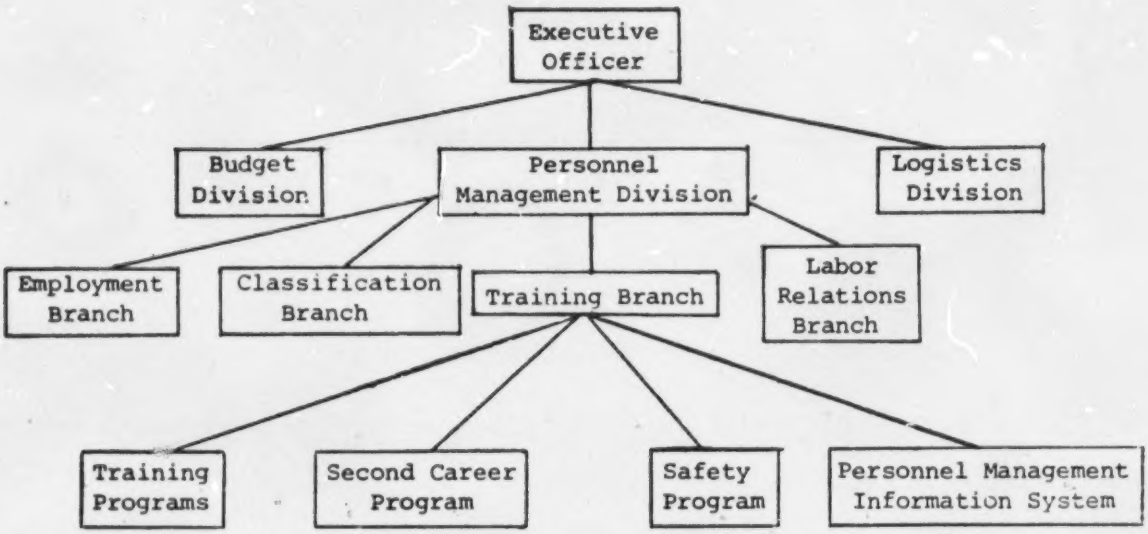
4.0 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Second Career Program is administered autonomously by each of the FAA's eleven regions. These regions are the New England Region in Burlington, Massachusetts; the Eastern Region in Jamaica, New York; the Southern Region in Atlanta, Georgia; the Southwest Region in Fort Worth, Texas; the Central Region in Kansas City, Missouri; the Great Lakes Region in Des Plaines, Illinois; the Western Region in Los Angeles, California; the Rocky Mountain Region in Aurora, Colorado; the Northwest Region in Seattle, Washington; the Alaskan Region in Anchorage, Alaska; and the Pacific-Asia Region in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Guidelines for Program administration or FAA implementation of the legislation are provided to the regional Second Career Program Managers by the Washington FAA Headquarters. However, the Washington Second Career Specialist has no line authority over the regional Second Career Program Managers (see Section 7.0).

Because we are focusing on the New England Region in this case history, a partial organizational chart of that region is presented as an example of the autonomous structure of each region (see the following page). As seen in this chart, the New England Region's Second Career Program Manager reports to the Chief, Training Branch, who in turn reports to the Chief, Personnel Management Division. Divisional and Branch administrators would thus make many of the key decisions affecting the administration of the Second Career Program in the New England Region.

Partial Organizational Chart: New England Region



5.0 FUNDING

In 1972, the first year of Second Career operation, actual expenditures for the Program in all eleven regions totaled $8 million. Last year, Second Career Program costs totaled $23 million. In the New England Region, 1977 Second Career Program costs amounted to approximately $1,215,000.

Per client expenses for the Region's Second Career Program have ranged from $45,000 to $75,000 over a two year period. These figures represent the total client costs, most of which are salary and training expenses.

6.0 STAFFING

One of the key problems of the Second Career Program is a shortage of staff. In the New England Region, the Second Career Program is operated by Ben Parker, Program Manager, and a part-time secretary. Mr. Parker has administrative, counseling, monitoring, placement and follow-up responsibilities for some 35 active clients (35 to 1). In the Southern Region, which is the largest, there are four full time staff members and 181 active clients (45 to 1).

At the present time, there are 17 full time staff members administering the Second Career Program; 847 clients are active in the Program. Thus, to date, the client-staff ratio for the total Program is 50 to 1. Such staffing limitations have doubtlessly been one of the key reasons for program problems, since clients cannot be monitored as frequently as they should be.*

Ben Parker has been able to keep such problems to a minimum in his region only by spending evenings and weekends out in the field. Yet, even with this level of dedication, he readily admits that he has not been able to give some clients the kind of services they deserve. In many cases, there has been a direct relationship between lack of time to monitor a specific client and that client's termination from the Program.

In addition to the primary Second Career staff for each region, some regions have utilized outside career consulting firms to provide vocational counseling and assessment services to their clients. In the New England region, the services of a number of consulting firms were utilized. Finally, after many

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*The Washington office has requested additional Second Career positions through the budget process, but due to other more pressing priorities these positions have not been available.

fruitless experiences, the New England region was able to find two career consulting firms which were willing to work within the scope of the Second Career Program.

The New England region's experiences with consulting firms is representative of the experiences of other regions which have tried to involve professional career consultants. To be sure, the use of expert consultants could save the regions valuable staff time. Consultants could also supplement the counseling skills of regional Program administrators. However, in few instances, have these results been realized. (Readers who wish a more detailed discussion of career consultants are referred to Section 8.1 of this case history.)

7.0 SUPERVISION AND INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION

As mentioned in Section 4.0, Harold Alexander, the Second Career Specialist in the FAA's Washington office, has no line authority over the regional Program directors. Supervision of Second Career Program Managers, in this sense, is the responsibility of Branch and Division Chiefs. In the New England region, the Second Career Program Manager sees a need for greater understanding of and support for the Program, particularly from among higher administrative levels of the Region. Such support is especially needed regarding requests for additional staff for the Second Career Program.* A different emphasis regarding the internal supervision and support of the Second Career Program may be found in each of the regions.

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*For example, the New England Region has budgeted for another Second Career staff person, but it will take at least two years before such a position is approved.

A Program-wide monitoring mechanism does exist, albeit in a less hierarchical manner. As the central Second Career Specialist, it is Harold Alexander's responsibility to assist regional Program managers in solving specific problems. Alexander makes regular site-visits to each of the regions in order to render this type of assistance. These site visits also enable Alexander to identify Program-wide trends, problems, and issues which need to be addressed in Second Career Program conferences. These conferences, which are arranged by Alexander, represent an opportunity for the Program directors to share their problems and achievements, and to make recommendations for program improvements.

In addition to the annual conferences, the Washington office publishes a computer listing of training plans being pursued by clients in each region. According to Ben Parker, this list has been an invaluable resource and has encouraged frequent phone contacts between regional Program Managers. It is especially effective when a client in a given region elects to pursue an unusual training program, about which the regional Program Manager has little knowledge. Many times when such situations occur, the regional Program Manager has been able to identify a client in another region who has pursued a similar training program. A single phone call to the Program Manager in the relevant region has often produced invaluable training contacts and general feedback about the career field in question.

Inspite of these cooperative efforts, one of the key issues for the Second Career Program continues to be the ambiguity that surrounds the Program supervision and decision-making tasks. Clearly, there is substantial controversy within the FAA as to whether or not there is a need for stronger national guidance and direction for regional Program Managers and their Branch and Division chiefs. Ben Parker, who argues strongly for Regional autonomy, is emphatic about the need for a Program-wide mechanism which would enable regional

Program Managers to have impact on key Second Career decisions. Such a mechanism would permit a certain amount of regional autonomy, while allowing key Program-wide decisions to be made when regional Program Managers are in agreement. Disagreements between regional Program Managers and their Branch or Division chiefs could then be settled either on a regional basis or on a national basis depending on the specific situation.

The Second Career Program Evaluation mechanism is one example of how national direction can insure regional Program quality. Program evaluations are conducted on a rotating basis in the regions. If Program deficiencies are identified, specific recommendations for improvements are made in the evaluation report, which is sent back to the region concerned. Again, there is controversy within the Administration as to whether the Program evaluation mechanism has been utilized as effectively or as frequently as it could have been during the first five years of the Program's existence.

8.0 CLIENT SERVICES

The client services description which appears below highlights the approach used by the New England Region. Although the general design applies to the Second Career Program in other regions, the specific techniques employed were developed by Ben Parker, Manager of the New England Region Program. Where appropriate, occasional references will be made to other regional Programs whose approaches offer significant comparisons with the approach utilized by the New England Region.

8.1 Vocational Counseling and Assessment

Once an employee indicates a desire to enter the Second Career Program he must begin the process of identifying a career area in which he would have

a reasonable chance of finding productive employment. Once this area is identified and the likelihood of productive employment within it confirmed, the employee develops a training plan, to which he is expected to be faithful.

The choice of a realistic career area is considered by Ben Parker to be the most important step in the Second Career Process. As a result, Parker spends the majority of his initial time with clients questioning them about the hobbies and interests which they may have been pursuing while working as air traffic controllers. In most cases, clients have been able to identify these interest areas readily. Few of them, however, view their interests as indicators of potential career areas. A client might do gardening, fishing, or horseback riding without ever thinking that these interests could lead to such careers as greenhouse management, charter fishing, or Equestrian Management. Yet, in the New England Region, this transformation of interest into career is a norm.

Once an interest is discussed, career research begins. Working with the client, Ben Parker makes phone calls to professional associations, schools, companies, and individuals who might be able to suggest viable career and training possibilities in the general area of interest. In this way, a training plan emerges in a step by step fashion. In such cases, there is little disagreement between the client and the Program Manager as to what the training plan should contain.

However, not all clients enter counseling needing to be led to a career choice. Some clients have a clear idea of what career they would like to pursue. In some cases they choose areas which are easily confirmed as being realistic for employment; in other cases, initial career choices prove to be unrealistic or inappropriate for the individual. One client, for example, aspired to be a professional golfer. Although his golf skills were excellent, the Program Director suspected that the client's back difficulties might prove to be a major obstacle to his career aspirations. In order to investigate this, eleven golf

schools were surveyed. All of them required courses in the installation and maintenance of greens. These courses were part of the PGA Program requirements. When the client was informed of this, he agreed that his first career choice should be abandoned. Instead, he selected hotel management and formulated his training plan accordingly. Other clients in the New England Region have encountered similar situations, and all have come up with viable career alternatives.

Ben Parker's emphasis on the clients' interests and hobbies has been an effective career counseling technique for a variety of reasons. One of these reasons is that Second Careerists are usually middle-aged men with some sort of physical or mental disability and, thus, are unlikely to be able to compete with younger men and women for some full time skilled jobs. They must find a way to circumvent both the disability and age discrimination factors. By focusing on their interests and hobbies, they are likely to identify skills which may not be affected by their disabilities. When these skills are translated into career possibilities, many of the careers involved are unusual and frequently suggest self-employment prospects. This in turn suggests that there will be less competition in the career area, and more opportunity to make the job fit the needs of the client.

Many of the New England Region clients who have transformed interest or hobby into career have realized two important benefits. They have found a way to do something that they enjoy doing, and they have found a means for supplementing their income. In many cases, the salary or income that results from the new career area is not enough, by itself, to support a client and his spouse. However, when the extra income is combined with the client's disability retirement annuity, it is usually adequate. Many Second Careerists have even been able to pursue their new careers on a part time or seasonal basis and still meet their financial requirements.

Although Ben Parker's approach is certainly relevant to clients in other regions, it should be mentioned that this method of identifying careers is most

effective when used with older clients who do not require high paying full-time jobs, which is the case with many New England clients. The average age for New England Second Careerists is 48. Few clients have major financial responsibilities such as mortgage payments or tuition for their children's education. In most cases, clients just need to support themselves and their spouses.*

Although Ben Parker's efforts represent the core of the counseling process, several outside career consultants have been utilized to provide vocational testing and to assist in the career identification stage. These consultants include career counselors from several major universities as well as representatives from private firms. In most cases, the consultants did not sufficiently understand the nature of the Second Career Program, nor the specific obstacles facing Program participants, to be able to make appropriate career suggestions. One consultant even suggested that a particular Second Careerist consider a career as an air traffic controller!

However, after much trial and error, Career Concepts, a private consulting firm, was hired to provide initial career exploration and identification activities. Ben Parker has found that after clients participate in one of Career Concept's two and a half day programs, they are able to suggest concrete career alternatives. This saves the Program Manager a fair amount of time and often means that the client can move more rapidly through the counseling process.

Although the expertise of Career Concepts has helped in the delivery of counseling services, logistical considerations indicate that this still may not be the answer. In order for Career Concepts to operate a workshop, they must

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*Spouse involvement is encouraged in the New England Region, and Ben Parker often visits clients at home in order to give their spouses the opportunity to ask questions and become involved in the Second Career process.

have at least four participants. Because Second Careerists are located all over New England and because the beginning of training varies widely, it is not always possible to assemble four people together at the same time. As a result, counseling and assessment techniques and materials which can be utilized with individual clients must still be purchased or developed. Utilizing a variety of approaches and materials about which he has become familiar, Ben Parker is currently attempting to design career clarification exercises which can be used by individuals when they need them.

In contrast to the New England Region, some regions have not utilized outside consultants at all. Others have utilized consultants without much success. The result, Program-wide, has been that many clients have pursued inappropriate career goals.

This Second Career counseling dilemma is currently being addressed by the FAA's Washington office. Last year the Administration contracted with Kirschner Associates, a private consulting firm, to provide counseling and assessment to 55 Second Careerists in the state of New York. Kirschner Associates has submitted a report to the FAA, describing their experiences and making concrete recommendations concerning counseling and assessment techniques which are appropriate for use with Second Careerists. Readers who desire more information about Kirschner's findings are referred to the listing of the report in the Reference Section (12.0) of this case.

8.2 Training

Public Law 92-297 entitles Second Careerists to up to two years of training over a three year period. This training can be academic or vocational-technical in nature, or it can be an on-the-job training experience (OJT). The 1976 change to the FAA Order required training sources to be state approved and/or to be able

to demonstrate a track record in providing quality training in the specific area chosen by a Second Careerist. The Order also requires that a training agreement be developed that specifies a training objective. This training objective cannot be degree oriented unless it is ascertained that a degree is necessary in order to enter a specific field. Because training cannot extend beyond two full time years (or three part time years), and because most Second Careerists do not have prior educational experiences beyond high school, most training plans which require a degree sequence are at the associate degree level.

In the New England Region, primary emphasis is placed on securing OJT situations for clients. Many clients elect to pursue two year OJT arrangements, and many of the clients who choose academic or vocational programs include three to six month OJT experiences in their training plans. The reasons for this emphasis on OJT are the same ones Ben Parker gives for his counseling emphasis on client interests and hobbies. Unless a Second Careerist chooses an unusual career area in which his experience gives him a clear advantage over younger persons preparing for similar careers, academic or vocational training may be pursued in vain. William McKay, who chose to pursue commercial fishing, provides an excellent example of someone who has been able to combine past experiences with formal education in order to earn an employability edge over some of the younger graduates of his degree program (see Section 9.0). But McKay is an exception to the rule. The majority of clients are uncertain of their ability to return to the classroom and are unlikely to secure a competitive edge over their younger counterparts. George Lydick, who chose a two year OJT experience in radio and television production, provides a vivid example of the advantage of OJT experiences over vocational-academic training (see Section 9.0). Because Lydick was able to "volunteer" his services and enthusiasm, he was able to break into a new and highly competitive career field in a way that many younger

people with formal training would envy. He was given the chance to learn by doing--which is, incidentally, what most Second Careerists did when they entered air traffic control--and he eventually earned the admiration and support of his OJT supervisor. As a result, George Lydick now has a reputation as a skilled radio production specialist and has no trouble finding consulting jobs in his community. Had he chosen to pursue formal vocational training in the same field, the chances are that he would now be unemployed and disillusioned about his Second Career experience.

According to Ben Parker, OJT slots are easily found when the Program takes the initiative. Each year, Ben Parker sends out over 100 letters to firms suggested by university placement personnel, Employment Security Department contacts, and articles and advertisements in numerous trade journals. The letters explain the Second Career Program and the nature of client need for OJT experiences. Firms are told that Second Careerists' salaries will be paid by the FAA when legitimate OJT slots are secured. Many firms find this offer attractive and view it as an economical means for identifying potential skilled employees. Because the FAA does not require participating firms to make a definite employment offer at that time, most interested employers feel that they have little to lose and much to gain from such an agreement.

Nevertheless, many OJT sources have offered jobs to Second Careerists after they complete their training plans. Even when job offers have not resulted from such arrangements, excellent job references and job leads have been secured from the OJT source.

Program-wide follow-up figures compiled by the Washington office confirm the advantage of OJT experiences over other training options. According to Harold Alexander, employment percentages for those clients who elected OJT experiences are higher than the employment percentages for clients who elected

academic or vocational-technical programs. This fact is reflected in the figures given in the following table.*

	% of Employed Persons	% of Unemployed Persons
Enrolled in OJT slots	37%	23%
Enrolled in academic programs	45%	59%
Enrolled in Vocational-technical programs	18%	18%
	100%	100%

8.3 Monitoring Client Progress

The monitoring of client progress is an essential ingredient of Program quality control. Whether a client is enrolled in an educational institution or in an OJT slot, there will be times when he needs the support of the Program Manager in adjusting to a new environment, or in communicating his needs to faculty members or supervisors who do not fully understand the Second Career process. In the New England Region, the Second Career Manager usually accompanies clients to the meetings with educational or personnel officials with whom a training agreement is established. This face to face contact enables the Manager to explain the program fully and insure that both the client and the training contact understand Program expectations regarding client attendance and progress during the training period.

*These figures were compiled in October 1977; because responses are still coming in, the figures will be updated periodically.

In addition to this initial contact, the Program Manager makes site-visits at regular intervals to confer with the client and the training sponsor Ben Parker estimates that he visits each client in the Program every three months. During this visit, he accomplishes a number of objectives. He acts as Program spokesman and problem solver, helping to resolve any difficulties which may impede the success of training; he pinpoints FAA paperwork delays or specific requests for tools or materials which he can expedite on his return; he counsels clients and their spouses concerning present and anticipated career problems; and, finally, he works with clients and the training sources to begin identifying future placement options.

Due to the extent of his client load, Ben Parker is sometimes unable to spend as much time with certain clients as he feels these clients need and deserve. In such cases, there is a good chance that the frustrations and unresolved problems of clients will cause them to make more serious mistakes than they might have made if their progress had been monitored more closely. According to Ben Parker, three such cases have occured to date in his Program. All three involved unexplained periods of absence from the training site. All three resulted in termination from the Program, and all three terminations, according to Parker, might have been avoided if he had been able to spend more time with the clients. Due to the FAA's 1976 Second Career amendment to the Order, which requires repayment of training expenses when a client causes his own termination, such situations can be devastating to the clients and families involved. This factor alone underscores the vital importance of frequent progress monitoring of Second Careerists.

Another important follow-up strategy utilized by the New England Region is the annual meeting of all Program clients. Because Second Careerists are

located all over New England, they rarely have the opportunity to meet as a group and share their Program experiences. To facilitate such sharing, the Program will pay the travel expenses of any client who wishes to attend this meeting. The meeting is not mandatory, because those clients who have important school examinations or work commitments are expected to honor them. However, with these exceptions the meeting is enthusiastically attended. Each year a handful of Second Career graduates pay their own travel expenses to this meeting. Their presence is one of the biggest emotional boosts which current Second Careerists can receive. These Program graduates are generally among the most successful and their stories are the best proof of the variety of positive career changes made by air traffic controllers.

A final client follow-up variable requires mention. Under Public Law 92-297, Second Careerists may transfer from one region to another to pursue their training plans.* Although the Order included provisions for mutually agreeable transfers between regions, regional Program Managers have elected to retain primary responsibility for clients who choose to relocate to another region. In such a case, a copy of the client's training plan is sent to the appropriate region's Program Manager, who agrees to monitor the client's progress. However, any decisions which need to be made about the client are made by the Program Manager of the original region after conferring with the client's actual progress monitor.

8.4 Placement

According to follow-up questionnaire responses received to date (see Section 10.0), some 25% of the Second Career Program graduates are currently employed. This is comparable to the Department of Labor's placement figures

*Clients who must relocate in order to find an acceptable training source are reimbursed for their moving expenses; however, clients who desire to relocate for personal or family reasons must pay their own moving expenses.

for individuals over 40 years of age. Moreover, 20% of the Second Career graduates are employed in the career area for which they were trained. The salaries earned by Program graduates are low, but clearly adequate when added to their disability retirement earnings. The majority of the salaries reported were under $10,000 per year.

Of course, placement results differ from region to region. In the New England Region, placement of Second Careerists is above the 25% average. One of the reasons for this is the Program Manager's high degree of involvement in the placement process. Ben Parker works intensively with clients in developing resumes and interview techniques, as well as in identifying and pursuing job leads. Frequently, OJT sources will hire clients and, at the very least, most training sources provide clients with references and employment suggestions. At the least, the Program Manager's participation in the placement process gives clients the kind of interpersonal support which they need to overcome discouragement in their job search.

9.0 CLIENT INTERVIEWS

The following interviews were conducted by telephone, due to the diverse geographical location of Second Careerists in the New England Region. They represent a variety of career choices and training situations.

Edward Lohoski is pursuing a career in forestry and greenhouse management. He was an air traffic controller for 20 years before he was disqualified and entered the Second Career Program. After counseling sessions with Ben Parker and an outside career consultant, Edward decided to focus on the career area of forestry and greenhouse management. This area had been an interest of his for years. He had grown up on a farm and had continued to practice horticulture as a hobby throughout his years as an air traffic controller.

After determining his career focus, Ed approached several greenhouse owners about the possibility of an OJT arrangement. He received offers from most of the employers he contacted, and finally chose the OJT situation which would offer him the most opportunity to learn and the most possibility for future employment.

When we talked with him, Ed had almost finished the first of his two-year OJT experience. He had been able to learn a variety of specialties from the greenhouse staff and was confident that he would be offered a job as soon as he finished his training. He indicated that salaries in his field were somewhat low, but that this did not disturb him since he loved the work and would be able to live moderately well on the combination of his disability retirement and the average salary for his job.

William McKay just completed an associate degree program in Marine Science at the University of Rhode Island. Before entering the Second Career Program, he had been an employee of the FAA for 26 years, working for 21 of those years as an air traffic controller.

At the end of 1974, Bill had a heart attack. When he returned to work three months later, he realized that if he continued in his job he might have another heart attack. Shortly after this, he was medically disqualified and entered the Second Career Program.

After several counseling sessions with Ben Parker, Bill decided to pursue a career in commercial fishing, since he had been fishing as a hobby throughout his life. He then applied to the University of Rhode Island which, in Bill's opinion, has the best commercial fishing program in the world.

Bill knew that it takes years of experience to become a successful commercial fisherman, but he also realized that he would not be able to enter the field as a crew member on someone else's boat. He simply would not be able to do the heavy work required of him. The only way for him to enter the field

would be to buy his own boat, hire his own crew to do the heavy work, and begin fishing on a small-scale basis.

Bill eagerly pursued his degree program at the University of Rhode Island, taking 19 credits per semester. He worked on the University's training boat with young men twenty years his junior, winning the respect and cooperation of his fellow students who constantly pitched in to relieve Bill of the heavy work involved in training maneuvers.

By the time Bill earned his degree, he had been offered a teaching job in the University program, as well as several overseas positions. When we talked with him, Bill was still not sure what he would decide to do, but felt that he had a number of excellent career possibilities from which to choose.

George Gilch is currently looking for a job as an Employee Development Officer. He had been an air traffic controller for 17 years before he failed his Class II medical examination and subsequently entered the Second Career Program.

George chose Employee Development as a career area because he enjoyed his occasional instructional duties during his air traffic control career. After looking for appropriate OJT opportunities, he decided to pursue an OJT experience in the FAA New England Region Training Branch. He worked alternately as an instructor and a training scheduler, and attended several training sessions and workshops sponsored by American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and other professional associations which he joined.

Unfortunately, George did not have the opportunity to secure an OJT slot with a private employer. As such, he missed out on what has been for many clients a primary route to employment. Nevertheless, George has been steadily pursuing ASTD and other job leads since he completed the Program. He knows that there are not many firms which would hire a 57 year old man, regardless of his qualifications. Yet, he is still hoping he'll be lucky.

George Lydick is a radio and television production consultant. Before entering the Second Career Program, George had spent 33 years as an air traffic controller, serving 27 of those years in the FAA. He was disqualified from his job after the flight surgeon discovered a recurrence of George's bleeding ulcer condition.

After counseling with an outside career consultant and with Ben Parker, George elected to pursue a career in radio and television production, because of his long time interest in recording and radio announcing. He knew that the field would not be easy to break into, but felt that he had a good chance of finding consultant work if he learned the necessary skills. He elected to learn these skills in an OJT situation, because he preferred the process of "learning by doing" to the formal classroom approach.

He then approached the Program Manager at WTIC in Hartford, Connecticut about the possibility of an OJT position. Inspite of George's assurance, the Program Manager refused to believe that the FAA would pay George's salary for two years of work. To clarify the situation, Ben Parker met with the Program Manager and explained the Second Careers Program. Yet, the Program Manager still seemed doubtful and, finally, this particular OJT situation was abandoned.

Later in his search for a viable OJT slot, George met someone from Vo Tu Productions, an independent firm producing programs for cable television. This individual encouraged George and, before long, an OJT agreement was reached. Unlike larger stations such as WTIC, Vo Tu Productions needed trained manpower and gave George every possible opportunity to learn the craft of production. George began running the audio portion of several TV programs; although he received basic instruction, he had to learn the bulk of the job simply by doing it. He made a few minor mistakes, but won the admiration of his OJT supervisor, who soon moved George to a television camera operation position. Once again, he learned the bulk of the skills required while on the job.

By the end of his OJT experience, George had produced three of his own radio talk shows, announcing one of them himself. He even had Ben Parker as a guest on one of his shows in order to make his community more aware of the Second Career Program. George also made a wide variety of significant job contacts, contacts which have since led to production and taping jobs.

George now looks forward to more consulting work. He likes the flexibility of being able to make his own hours and choose the kind of jobs which interest him most. At some point, George hopes to collaborate with another Second Careerist who participated in a similar OJT experience. They plan to establish their own independent radio and television production company. In terms of their reputations and professional contacts, the seeds of that enterprise may already have been sown.

Joseph Gallagher is currently studying for an Assistant Instructor's Certificate at the Fulmer International School of Equitation, which is located in Pepperell, Massachusetts, just seven miles from his New Hampshire home. He had worked for 18 years as an air traffic controller before being disqualified from his job and entering the Second Career Program.

Horse riding had always been one of his wife's major interests. Although Joseph found that he had become increasingly interested in the subject through his wife's activities, it was not until he gave his wife a birthday present of ten lessons at the Fulmer School that he became truly excited about the area. Until then, he did not know that there was such a position as Certified Riding Instructor or that the career area provided excellent employment possibilities.

After counseling with Ben Parker and subsequent exploratory phone calls confirmed this fact, Joseph determined to pursue a second career in the horse riding field. He then enrolled in Fulmer's one year program leading to an Assistant Instructor's Certificate. In addition to learning British riding techniques, Joseph has also been studying facilities management and basic veterinary medicine.

After completing his studies at Fulmer's Massachusetts School, Joseph will go to the Fulmer School in England. There, he will receive an intensive review of all the material he has covered and will then take the British Horse Society's examination. Passing this exam will qualify Joseph as a certified assistant riding instructor.

Since the Fulmer School hires many of its students, Joseph feels that he will have an excellent opportunity for employment once he passes his exam. Both Joseph and his wife plan to pursue the career area together. They are confident that jobs will be available to them, and are willing to relocate to do the kind of work that they both love.

10. PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Public Law 92-297 required the FAA to submit a formal report to the Congress dealing with the results of the Second Career Program during its first five years of operation. This report, entitled Five Year Report on the Operations Under Public Law 92-297, was recently signed by Brock Adams, Secretary of Transportation, and submitted to the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee. After reviewing this document, this Congressional committee may decide to schedule hearings to change Public Law 92-297.

Much of the statistical information which appears in the Report was derived from client evaluation questionnaire responses. These questionnaires were sent to clients six months and one year after their termination from the Program. As of October, 1977, over 500 of the 800 completed or terminated clients had responded to the questionnaire.*

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*A total of 1583 clients have participated or are participating in the Program; 736 have terminated, and 847 remain in the training pool.

One significant finding which resulted from questionnaire data indicated that an overwhelming majority (75%) of employed clients completed their full training sequences, whereas only a small percentage (25%) of the employed clients did not complete their training plans. This and related data included in the following table suggest that the Program might be considerably more effective if it included greater incentives for client completion.

	Completed Training	Did Not Complete Training	Were Terminated by the Program
Employed Clients	75%	25%	-
Unemployed Clients	47%	48%	5%

Other significant data derived from client questionnaire responses is included in sections 8.2 and 8.4 of this case.

Still another formal evaluation of the Program will be forthcoming from the Government Accounting Office, which has been reviewing the Program for the last year and a half. The combination of this program review and the Five Year Report could stimulate legislative action requiring significant changes in the Second Career Program.

11.0 THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

In focusing on the New England Region's Second Career Program, we have tried to show how many of the primary intentions of Public Law 92-297 can be and have been successfully realized. We have also tried to indicate key areas

of Program and legislative difficulty which have impeded the Second Career Program from achieving its full potential. Both Harold Alexander and Ben Parker, our key Program contacts for this case, were outspoken about the Program revisions which are needed to strengthen Program integrity and improve client services, as well as about Program achievements and their implications for future government career change strategies and programs. The following subsections state or re-state the key issues as viewed by Alexander and Parker.

11.1 Needed Program and/or Legislative Changes

If the Second Careers Program is to achieve its potential, changes need to be effected in areas of client services, administrative procedures, and eligibility requirements. The following changes are necessary to improve the quality of client services:

-- more Program staff are needed to counsel, monitor, and assist in the placement of clients;

-- better counseling and assessment materials and techniques should be developed and Program staff should be trained in their use; and

-- more thorough and up-to-date information on labor market trends, pinpointing career areas most receptive to entry by workers over 40, should be assembled and made available to regional Program directors (Harold Alexander's strategies for collaboration with the Department of Labor are a possible starting point).

The following administrative changes are necessary to cement Program supervision structures and to facilitate cooperation between regional Program Managers.

-- there should be a clear delineation of the FAA's authority in interpreting Second Career legislation;

-- there should be a clearer delineation of those Second Career decisions which are subject to regional discretion and those which are made and dictated to the regions by the FAA Training Branch in Washington; and

-- there should be more frequent Program-wide conferences devoted to information sharing and problem solving for regional Program managers.

And the following eligibility changes would help to reduce program abuses and inequities:

-- disqualified air traffic controllers eligible for optional retirement should no longer qualify for the Second Career Program (there is evidence that many of the opticnal retirement eligibles who have entered the Program have done so primarily to extend their length of service: low placement percentages for these Second Careerists should support this judgment);

-- disqualified air traffic controllers who apply for and receive workmen's compensation (OWCP) benefits should no longer qualify for the Second Career Program (many of the Program abuses discovered in the last two years involve unnecessary and costly overlap between workmen's compensation and Second Career salary payments); and

-- the five year air traffic controller service requirement should be more closely enforced by (1) counting service from the date a controller reaches full journeymen's status (GS 10) rather than from the hiring date, and by (2) requiring that the date of removal from an air traffic control position also be the date of disqualification.

Many, but not all of these suggested changes concur with those in the FAA's Five Year Report. Hopefully, legislative action, should it take place, will address the key areas of Second Career Program difficulty by mandating the kinds of changes suggested above.

11.2 Program Achievements and Replication Possibilities

In our study of the New England Region's Program, we have seen that productive second careers can be a reality for middle-aged air traffic controllers who have been involuntarily removed from their jobs. By stressing the importance of hobbies and interests in dictating alternative career possibilities, the New

England Program has helped its clients to select unique career fields. Many of these fields offer clients flexible work schedules which are compatible with their disabilities and which are consistent with their future career and family goals. Many of the career fields also offer clients excellent opportunities to set up their own small businesses, and often encourage spouse involvement in such ventures. Given the tremendous difficulty of identifying employers willing to hire older workers, the small business route seems particularly relevant to Second Career participants.

Moreover, the New England Region's emphasis on OJT experiences, both as a key training mechanism and as a potential placement mechanism, has proved instrumental to the success of its Second Career Program. Although formal academic and vocational training has been appropriate for some Second Careerists, the majority of the New England clients in their middle years have found OJT experiences to be a highly productive means for finding appropriate employment.

Yet perhaps the most important success factor for the New England Second Career Program has been the regular and responsive contact with clients maintained by the regional Program Manager. Several of the clients we interviewed told us that while enrolled in the Program they had received more encouragement and genuine concern about their personal and career goals than they had at any other time in their FAA careers. It is this interpersonal rapport between the Program Director and his clients which, in our opinoin, is the foundation on which any successful career change program must be built.

In reviewing Program achievements in the New England Region alone, it is clear to us that there is much about the Second Career Program which is exemplary and appropriate for replication in other institutional settings. Moreover, other government agencies might be able to create their own Second Career

programs at lower cost, particularly if payment of high salaries, such as those commanded by air traffic controllers, is not involved.

The creation of a Second Career type program for all government employees involuntarily removed from their jobs is not as far-fetched as it may sound. A recent paper published by the Federal Personnel Management Project (see Reference Section) makes several suggestions as to how competent career staff can be re-trained before reduction in force (RIF) and other no fault removal actions. Although this paper refers primarily to the possibility of career change possibilities within the Federal Government, attention to this matter will no doubt result in outplacement considerations as well. In this respect, the FAA's Second Career Program can be expected to serve as an important resource to government administrators and legislators considering the subject of involuntary career change.

12.0 REFERENCES

Five Year Report on the Operations Under Public Law 92-297; Air Traffic Controller Career Program; Federal Aviation Administration; Department of Transportation; Washington, D.C. 1977.

Counseling, Testing and Second Career Monitoring of the Air Traffic Controller Second Career Program; Final Report submitted to the FAA by Kirschner Associates (Michael Batten, Project Director); 733 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005; November, 1977.

Second Career Program Orders and Changes; Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation; Washington, D.C.; 1972, 1975, 1976.

13.0 APPENDIX: PROGRAM CONTACTS

This case history has been based primarily on interviews with Ben Parker, Manager of the New England Region's Second Career Program, and Harold Alexander, Second Career Program Specialist at the FAA headquarters in Washington. The addresses and telephone numbers for Parker and Alexander are given below.

Mr. Ben Parker
FAA, Training Branch
ANE-17
12 New England Executive Park
Burlington, Mass. 01803
(617) 273-7220

Mr. Harold Alexander
Training Branch, APT-320
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20590
(202) 426-8844

The addresses of other FAA regions operating Second Career Programs are provided below.

Chief, Training Branch - AEA-17
FAA, Eastern Region
Federal Building
JFK International Airport
Jamaica, NY 11430

Chief, Training Branch - ASO-17
FAA, Southern Region
P.O. Box 20636
Atlanta, GA 30320

Chief, Training Branch - ASW-17
FAA, Southwest Region
P.O. Box 1689
Fort Worth, Texas 76101

Chief, Training Branch - ACE-17
FAA, Central Region
601 East 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Chief, Training Branch - AGL-17
FAA, Great Lakes Region
2300 DeVon Avenue
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Chief, Training Branch - AWE-17
FAA, Western Region
P.O. Box 92007
Worldway Postal Center
Los Angeles, CA 90009

Chief, Training Branch - ARM-17
FAA, Rocky Mountain Region
10455 E. 25th Avenue
Aurora, CO 80010

Chief, Training Branch - ANW-17
FAA, Northwest Region
FAA Building
9010 East Marginal Way
Seattle, WA 98108

Chief, Training Branch - AAL-17
FAA, Alaskan Region
632 Sixth Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

hief, Training Branch - APC-17
FAA, Pacific-Asia Region
P.O. Box 4009
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813